

The Trading Game

How to play

Preparation

1. All the players must be able to see the diagram of shapes and the four rules (see *additional info cards*) during the game, so copy these onto a board or make them into posters for display. You may need several posters for a large room.
2. Arrange the equipment in sets (in envelopes) as listed under 'Resources' (see right).
3. Arrange the furniture so that each group has a flat working area.
4. You need two organisers per game – one banker and one leader. The leader should keep control of the game, taking note of how it develops and occasionally changing its direction by introducing new elements (see *creating new trading situations card*). Leaders must be ready to direct the discussion at the end of the game. For this it is useful to jot down anything interesting or significant that the players have said or done during the game.

5. The banker requires a copy of the diagram of shapes, a pen and a sheet of paper. Divide the paper into columns (one for each group) as a balance sheet to record credit, debit and balance for each country's income.
6. At least one group must have a Grade A resource set, as listed under resources on this page. However, do not point out to the groups that they are receiving different sets of materials – they will notice soon enough.

Resources

There are three grades of resources, as specified below:

Group A (two sets)

- 2 pairs of scissors
- 2 rulers
- 1 compass
- 1 set-square
- 1 protractor
- 1 sheet of paper
- 6 £100 notes
- 4 lead pencils

Group B (two sets)

- 10 sheets of paper
- 1 sheet of gummed paper
- 2 £100 notes

Group C (two sets)

- 4 sheets of paper
- 2 £100 notes
- 2 pencils

Objectives of the game

Each group tries to make as much money as possible using only the materials they are given. They can make money by manufacturing and selling goods. These are the shapes shown on the diagram, each of which has its own value. Players should take these to the banker in batches of five similar shapes. The banker will check them and credit their value to the group's bank account.

The object is to manufacture as many shapes as possible – the more they make the wealthier they will be.

Who's who? Quick reference

Groups	Players per group	Resource set	Possible countries
1-2	6	A	UK Italy US France
3-4	5	B	India Brazil Peru Nigeria
5-6	4	C	Tanzania Kenya Cambodia Ghana

Players per group represent trading power, not country populations.

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Leader's instructions

These are for the leader's reference, but should not be read aloud to the players.

1. Split the players into groups (see Who's who? Quick reference on card 2a). Allocate each group an area in the room or hall and a set of materials as indicated. Do not let groups open their resource envelopes until the game begins. Do not point out to the groups that they are receiving different sets of materials – they will notice soon enough.
2. Read out the objectives and rules of the game. Make sure the diagram of shapes and rules are visible to all. Repeat the rules quickly and then announce that 'manufacturing can begin'.

3. At the beginning of the game, the players may be confused or puzzled, and bombard you with questions: 'Why haven't we got scissors/paper/etc?' 'Where can I get scissors?' 'Can we borrow scissors?' 'Can we trade?' 'What's the gummed paper for?' Resist all temptation to answer – simply repeat the rules or stay silent.

After a minute or two of confusion, players should start moving around the room and begin trading. Remember: the initiative should come from them, not you.

4. The manufacturing and trading should continue for 30-45 minutes, depending on the size and interest of the group.

Take note of what is happening

The Grade A groups will begin making shapes immediately as they have all the necessary materials and equipment, but will soon run short of raw materials (paper) and will probably try to buy some from other groups. At first the groups with paper will probably sell it for a very low price; note how the 'terms of trade' change during the game as a result of the leader's interventions to create new trading situations.

You are the only person who can see how the game is developing, as the players will be engrossed in their own activities. It is therefore important you note the alliances and deals that develop and bring these into discussion at the end.

Stimulate activity by creating new trading situations

Some groups will feel upset and neglected. In order to encourage trading activity, you may have to feed in more information and create new situations – see the suggestions on the *create new trading situations* card. These have parallels in the real world. Some of these changes will apply to all the groups, but others you should communicate in secret to particular groups.